



Casualty Notification

HQ AFPC/DPWCS

Overview

AFPC



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Overview (cont)

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Purpose of Notification

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- To provide dignified, compassionate and humane notification to family members and other designated persons as promptly as possible after a member is placed in a casualty status

Method of Notification

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- An Air Force representative notifies the NOK of deceased, Duty Status-Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN) and missing members in person whenever feasible:
 - Member's commander
 - Notification team

Casualty Status Defined

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- **DECEASED** - A person who is either known to have died, determined to have died based on conclusive evidence, or declared dead based on a presumptive finding of death:
 - The recovery of remains is not a prerequisite to declaring a person deceased

Casualty Status Defined (cont)

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- DUSTWUN- A transitory casualty status applicable only to military personnel, which is used when the responsible commander suspects the member may be a casualty whose absence is involuntary, but does not feel sufficient evidence currently exists to make a definite determination of missing or deceased

Casualty Status Defined (cont)

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- **MISSING** - A status applicable to a person who is not present at his or her duty location due to apparent involuntary reasons and whose location may or may not be known:
 - Excludes personnel in an absent without leave (AWOL), deserter or dropped-from rolls status

Notification Responsibility



- Is on behalf of the Air Force Chief of Staff
- Has priority over all duties, except in emergencies
- Is accomplished in service dress uniform with the exception of the medical technician who can wear the uniform of the day (he/she remains in the vehicle)

Selection of Unit to Effect Notification

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- The Air Force will task the activity nearest the NOK's residence to accomplish the casualty notification.
Includes:
 - Active Duty Bases
 - Geographically Separated Units (GSU)
 - Air National Guard (ANG) Units
 - United States Air Force Reserve (USAFR) Units
 - Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps Detachments

Team Composition

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- Field grade officer (Major or above)
- Medical personnel
- Air Force Chaplain
 - Notification should not be delayed due to the inability to obtain a medical officer or chaplain

Transportation

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- **Authorized vehicles for use in accomplishing casualty notification:**
 - Air Force Sedan
 - Air Force Station Wagon
 - Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) (if not assigned to an active duty base)

Communication Support

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- The Military Personnel Flight (MPF) or GSU commander, provides the notification officer or team a cellular telephone or two-way radio for portable communication with their installation casualty office and HQ AFPC/DPWCS

Location of the NOK

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- The CAR or HQ AFPC/DPWCS will provide the notification officer the NOK's last known address
 - The notification officer should contact the local law enforcement officials if assistance is necessary to protect the notification team in a dangerous area, or if they might help the officer locate the NOK with rural route or post office box addresses

Inability to Locate NOK

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- If it appears the NOK is not at home, the notification officer should contact neighbors, police department, or local postmaster for information regarding NOK's whereabouts
- If the notification team cannot locate the NOK, or the NOK has moved from the area, immediately contact HQ AFPC/DPWCS at their toll free number from the area for further guidance

Notification Letter

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- A notification letter is not required when the member's commander or designated representative personally notifies the NOK
- The notification letter is completed by HQ AFPC/DPWCS and emailed/faxed to the installation CAR or officer at the GSU
 - The CAR or officer must retype the letter verbatim and error-free

Making the Notification

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- The CAR or HQ AFPC/DPWCS provides the notification officer with:
 - **Notification procedures briefing**
 - **Notification letter**
 - **NOK's name and address**
 - **Advice/instructions if problems occur**
 - **Map of the area, if available (CAR only)**
 - **Transportation (CAR only)**
 - **Cellular telephone or two-way radio (CAR only)**
 - **HQ AFPC/DPWCS toll free number**

Making the Notification (cont)

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- As a minimum, the notification officer should:
 - Identify him/herself as a representative of the Air Force Chief of Staff
 - Make sure they are speaking to the correct person(s) by confirming the identity of the NOK
 - Paraphrase the circumstances as described in the notification letter

Making the Notification (cont)

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- **Don't hurry the words; speak as naturally as possible**
- **Don't extend overly sympathetic gestures that may be taken the wrong way**
- **Don't physically touch the NOK in any manner unless there is shock or fainting**

Making the Notification (cont)

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- Avoid making detailed statements about the incident
- State that the member's commander will send a letter explaining the circumstances of the incident
- Give the notification letter to the NOK, if applicable

Making the Notification (cont)

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- Refer the NOK to:
 - The home installation commander for information on CONUS casualties
 - HQ AFPC/DPWCS for information on overseas casualties

Informing the NOK

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- Inform NOK eligible for casualty assistance that a CAR will contact them within 24-hours to arrange for a personal casualty assistance visit at their convenience**
- Verify NOK's:**
 - Name**
 - Home address**
 - Telephone number**

Informing the NOK (cont)

AFPC



- Inform the NOK, as indicated in the notification letter that:
 - For CONUS casualties, a mortuary affairs representative will contact them regarding mortuary affairs
 - Headquarters, Air Force Mortuary Services, San Antonio TX, will contact them regarding mortuary affairs for overseas casualties, aircraft accidents and accidents involving multiple casualties

Not Discussed With NOK

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- Questions about survivor benefits, burial or similar matters
- Compensation-related questions dealing with insurance, gratuities, arrears of pay and so forth
- Questions relating to line of duty, negligence, errors in judgment or the responsibility of other personnel concerned with the incident
- Questions relating to mortuary affairs

Notifying Other Family Members

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- Ask the NOK if they wish to notify other family members or have them notified by the Air Force
- Obtain name, relationship, address and telephone number on other family members to be notified by the NOK or by the Air Force
- Advise the NOK to contact HQ AFPC/DPWCS at their toll free number as soon as notification to other family members have been completed

Notifying Other Family Members (cont)

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- As soon as possible, provide to HQ AFPC/DPWCS all information obtained from the NOK
- Stay with the NOK as long as needed, but depart the residence in a professional manner and within a reasonable period of time

Verification of Notification



- After the notification is complete, immediately telephone HQ AFPC/DPWCS at their toll free number from the NOK's area but not from their home with:
 - Time notification completed
 - NOK's name, address and telephone number
 - Unusual events or comments made by the NOK
 - Information on other family members to be notified by the NOK or the Air Force

Casualty Services Branch

AFPC



- HQ AFPC/DPWCS is available to answer questions or assist in any casualty matter, 24 hours a day:
 - DSN **665-3505/2411**
 - Country Code: **312-665-3505**
 - Commercial: **1-210-565-3505**
 - Fax DSN: **665-2348**
 - Toll Free: **1-800-433-0048**